

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 08295 191704Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT GR

SUBJ: MONARCHY PLEBISCITE

1. SUMMARY. DECEMBER 8 PLEBISCITE ON GREECE'S MONARCHY HAS BEEN LAUNCHED IN MEASURED, ALMOST DULL, MANNER WITH CARAMANLIS ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GREEK PEOPLE WILL DECIDE ISSUE WITHOUT GUIDANCE FROM HIM OR NEW DEMOCRACY AND WITH FORMER KING'S EXPRESSIO OF INTENTION TO CAMPAIGN VIA PRESS CONFERENCE IN LONDON. END SUMMARY.

2. AT PRESS CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 18, NEWLY ELECTED PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, WHEN ASKED BY FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT WHETHER HIS NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY WOULD TAKE A DEFINITE STAND ON THE MONARCHY PROBLEM, REPLIED THAT THE GREEK PEOPLE THEMSELVES WOULD DECIDE. APPARENTLY CARAMANLIS HAS NO INTENTION OF BUDGING FROM HIS PRE-ELECTION PUBLIC AMBIVALENCE WHICH HAS BEEN INTERPRETED WIDELY AS MASKING A PERSONAL ANTIPATHY TOWARD THE RETURN OF THE MONARCHY. THERE IS NO INDICATION THUS FAR HOW ACTIVELY NOTED NEW
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 08295 191704Z

DEMOCRACY ROYALISTS LIKE GEORGE RALLIS MAY CAMPAIGN

FOR THE KING'S RETURN.

3. ATHENS PRESS CARRIED LONDON REPORT THAT EX-KING CONSTANTINE WILL HOLD TWO PRESS CONFERENCES ON NOVEMBER 21 IN LONDON, ONE AIMED AT FOREIGN PRESS AND ONE AT GREEK PUBLIC. ALL ATHENS DAILIES CARRIED CONSTANTINE'S BRIEF ELECTION EVE STATEMENT PAYING TRIBUTE "TO THE HEROIC (POLYTECHNION) DEAD WHO WILL REMAIN A SYMBOL OF SACRIFICE, HUMAN DIGNITY AND FREEDOM - NO ONE CAN FORGET THEM." THERE WAS ALSO A GENERAL REPORT THAT EX-MONARCH SPENT EIGHT HOURS NOVEMBER 17 WITH ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS WITHOUT, HOWEVER, SPECULATION WHETHER CONVERSATION INVOLVED ISSUE OF MONARCHY. TO VIMA EDITORIALIZED NOVEMBER 19 THAT GREEK TV SHOULD NOT CARRY PRESS CONFERENCES AND PERSONAL APPEALS BY CONSTANTINE BECAUSE THE PLEBISCITE IS NOT ABOUT THE PERSON OF CONSTANTINE BUT ABOUT FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

4. TO VIMA, WHICH UNTIL RECENTLY CRITICIZED CARAMALIS FOR NOT SPEAKING PUBLICLY ON MONARCHY QUESTION, URGES ALL POLITICAL LEADERS TO KEEP SILENT ON THE ISSUE WITH OFFICIAL COMMENT NOW RESERVED FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL SPECIALISTS ONLY. THUS FAR ONLY ELLENIKON MELLON AND AKROPOLIS TEND TO GIVE SYMPATHETIC FRONTPAGE ATTENTION TO MONARCHY. SEVERAL PAPERS REPORT AS STRIGHT NEWS THAT RETIRED GENERAL GEORGE KOUROKLIS CHAIRS A COMMITTEE OF ROYALISTS WHICH HAS OPENED THREE DOWNTOWN OFFICES TO WORK FOR A YES VOTE IN THE PLEBISCITE. ONLY ELLENIKON MELLON POINTS OUT THAT THE GENERAL WAS AN APOLOGIST FOR RESISTANCE STUDENTS AND EARLY SUPPORTER OF THE POLYTECHNION MOVEMENT.

5. IN ROUTINE ANNOUNCEMENT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR SAID IT IS PROCEEDING WITH NECESSARY STEPS TO PREPARE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF PLEBISCITE.

6. ALL PAPERS ANTICIPATE THAT REGARDLESS OF RESULTS OF DECEMBER 8 VOTE, PRESIDENT GHIZIKIS WILL RESIGN HIS OFFICE THE DAY AFTER PLEBISCITE. THIS CONFORMS TO PERTINENT CONSTITUTIONAL ACT PROVISIONS, ACCORDING TO WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 08295 191704Z

PARLIAMENT WOULD THEREAFTER ELECT PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT. KUBISCH

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